THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ABOUT
THE DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND
THE DIFFICULTY IN REPAYING IT

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ON CAUSE
AND EFFECT IN THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF THE CHANGES TO
COME SUTRA

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TEN REWARDS FROM PRINTING BUDDHIST SUTRAS AND MAKING BUDDHA-IMAGES.

People who print sutras and make images obtain the following benefits:

They wipe away all evil karma created by light offenses made in the past and they reduce the retribution due to them from their serious offenses.

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Yaksha-ghosts and other evil ghosts cannot encroach;poisonous snakes or man-eating beasts cannot bring harm.

They experience peace of mind; by day they meet no danger;at night they have no bad dreams. Their complexion will be ruddy and moist; their energy will be full and vital.All of their business will quickly prosper and will meet with ultimate success.

As a result of their sincere honoring of the Dharma, quite naturally they will have ample clothing and abundant food, even though they do not wish for or seek after such things. Their families will be at peace; blessings and prosperity will constantly increase.

Other people, even Gods, will immediately take a liking to things these people say and do. Wherever they go, they will be greeted by happy throngs of dear friends who respect and revere them.

Stupid people will grow wiser, unhealthy people will grow healthier. Troubled people will feel happier, and women will become men in their next lifetime if they wish to do so.

They will depart forever from the Evil Destinies, and will be reborn always in wholesome places, with a handsome and upright appearance, and an unusually fine character. They will enjoy supreme happiness and abundant wealth.

They will be able to plant roots of goodness on behalf of all living beings. They will treat the minds of living beings as a grand blessings field, and will help them reap a bounteous, measureless harvest there.

In whatever land they are born, they will always see the Buddha and hear the Dharma. Ultimately, they will obtain full use of the Three Modes of Wisdom, will be certified as possessing Six Psychic Penetrations, and will quickly accomplish Buddhahood.

Since printing sutras and making images brings such incomparable merit and virtue, every time people have occasion to celebrate a birthday, offer congratulations, when they seek to fulfill a wish, or to avert a calamity, to repent and reform past errors, or to rise in position, in every event such as these, it is fitting to joyfully donate the means for printing sutras or making images, and then vigorously pursue their wishes.

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ABOUT THE DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND THE DIFFICULTY IN REPAYING IT

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Thus I have heard, at one time, the Buddha dwelt at Shravasti, in the Jeta Grove, in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary, together with a gathering of great Bhikshus, twelve hundred fifty in all, and with all of the Bodhisattvas, thirty-eight thousand in all.

At that time, the World Honored One led the great assembly on a walk toward the south. Suddenly they came upon a pile of bones beside the road. The World Honored One turned to face them, placed his five limbs on the ground, and bowed respectfully.

Ananda put his palms together and asked the World Honored One, "The Tathagatha is the Great Teacher of the Triple Realm and the compassionate father of beings of the four kinds of births. He has the respect and reverence of the entire assembly. What is the reason that he now bows to a pile of dried bones?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "Although all of you are my foremost disciples and have been members of the Sangha for a long time, you still have not achieved far-reaching understanding. This pile of bones could have belonged to my ancestors from former lives. They could have been my parents in many past lives. That is the reason I now bow to them." The Buddha continued speaking to Ananda. "These bones we are looking at can be divided into two groups. One group is composed of the bones of men, which are heavy and white in color. The other group is composed of the bones of women, which are light and black in color."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, when men are alive in the world they adorn their bodies with robes, belts, shoes, hats and other fine attire, so that they clearly assume a male appearance. When women are alive, they put on cosmetics, perfumes, powders, and elegant fragrances to adorn their bodies, so that they clearly assume a female appearance. Yet, once men and women die, all that is left are their bones. How does one tell them apart? Please teach us how you are able to distinguish them."

The Buddha answered Ananda, "If when men are in the world, they enter temples, listen to explanations of Sutras and Vinaya texts, make obeisance to the Triple Jewel, and recite the Buddhas' names, then when they die their bones will be heavy and white in color. Most women in the world have little wisdom and are saturated with emotion. They give birth to and raise children, feeling that this is their duty. Each child relies on its mother's milk for life and nourishment, and that milk is a transformation of the mother's blood. Each child drinks one thousand two hundred gallons of its mother's milk. Because of this drain on the mother's body whereby the child takes milk for its nourishment, the mother becomes worn and haggard and so her bones turn black in color and are light in weight."

When Ananda heard these words, he felt a pain in his heart as if he had been stabbed and wept silently. He said to the World Honored One, "How can one repay one's mother's kindness and virtue?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "Listen well, and I will explain it for you in detail. The fetus grows in its mother's womb for ten lunar months. What

bitterness she goes through while it dwells there! In the first month of pregnancy, the life of the fetus is as precarious as a dewdrop on grass: how likely that it will not last from morning to evening but will evaporate by mid-day!

"During the second lunar month, the embryo congeals like curds. In the third month it is like coagulated blood. During the fourth month of pregnancy the fetus begins to assume a slightly human form. During the fifth month in the womb, the child's five limbs--two legs, two arms, and a head --start to take shape. In the sixth lunar month of pregnancy, the child begins to develop the essences of the six sense faculties: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. During the seventh month, the three hundred sixty bones and joints are formed, and the eighty-four thousand hair pores are also complete. In the eighth lunar month of the pregnancy the intellect and the nine apertures are formed. By the ninth month the fetus has learned to assimilate the different nutrients of the foods it eats. For example, it can assimilate the essence of peaches, pears, certain plant roots, and the five kinds of grains.

"Inside the mother's body, the solid internal organs, used for storing, hang downward, while the hollow internal organs, used for processing, spiral upward. These can be likened to three mountains which arise from the face of the earth. We can call these mountains Mount Sumeru, Karma Mountain, and Blood Mountain. These analogous mountains come together and form a single range in a pattern of upward peaks and downward valleys. So, too, the coagulation of the mother's blood from her internal organs forms a single substance, which becomes the child's food.

During the tenth month of pregnancy, the body of the fetus is completed and ready to be born. If the child is extremely filial, it will emerge with palms joined together in respect and the birth will be peaceful and auspicious. The mother will remain uninjured by the birth and will not suffer pain. However, if the child is extremely rebellious in nature, to the extent that it is capable of committing the five rebellious acts[1], then it will injure its mother's womb, rip apart its mother's heart and

[1]The five rebellious acts are patricide, matricide, murdering a sage, breaking up the Sangha, and shedding the Buddhas' blood.

liver, or get entangled in its mother's bones. The birth will feel like the slices of a thousand knives or like ten thousand sharp swords stabbing her heart. Those are the agonies involved in the birth of a defiant and rebellious child.

To explain more clearly, there are ten types of kindness bestowed by the mother on the child:

The first is the kindness of providing protection and care while the child is in the womb.

The second is the kindness of bearing suffering during the birth.

The third is the kindness of forgetting all the pain once the child has been born.

The fourth is the kindness of eating the bitter herself and saving the sweet for the child.

The fifth is the kindness of moving the child to a dry place and lying in the wet herself.

The sixth is the kindness of suckling the child at her breast and nourishing and bringing up the child.

The seventh is the kindness of washing away the unclean.

The eighth is the kindness of always thinking of the child when it has traveled far.

The ninth is the kindness of deep care and devotion.

The tenth is the kindness of ultimate pity and sympathy.

1. THE KINDNESS OF PROVIDING PROTECTION AND CARE WHILE THE CHILD IS IN THE WOMB

The causes and conditions from accumulated
kalpas grows heavy,
Until in this life the child ends up in
in its mother's womb.
As the months pass, the five vital
organs develop;
Within seven weeks the six sense organs
start to grow.
The mother's body becomes as heavy as
a mountain;
The stillness and movements of the fetus
are like a kalpic wind disaster.
The mother's fine clothes no longer
hang properly,
And so her mirror gathers dust.

2. THE KINDNESS OF BEARING SUFFERING DURING BIRTH

The pregnancy lasts for ten lunar months
And culminates in difficult labor at the approach of the birth.
Meanwhile, each morning the mother is seriously ill
And during every day is drowsy and sluggish.
Her fear and agitation are difficult to describe;
Grieving and tears fill her breast.
She painfully tells her family
That she is only afraid that death will overtake her.

3. THE KINDNESS OF FORGETTING ALL THE PAIN ONCE THE CHILD HAS BEEN BORN

On the day the compassionate mother bears the child,
Her five organs all open wide,
Leaving her totally exhausted in body and mind.
The blood flows as from a slaughtered lamb;

Yet, upon hearing that the child is
healthy,
She is overcome with redoubling joy.
But after the joy, the grief returns,
And the agony wrenches her very insides.

4. THE KINDNESS OF EATING THE BITTER HERSELF AND SAVING THE SWEET FOR THE CHILD

The kindness of both parents is profound
and deep,
Their care and devotion never cease.
Never resting, the mother saves the
sweet for the child,
And without complaint she swallows the
bitter herself.
Her love is weighty and her emotion
difficult to bear;
Her kindness is deep and so is her
compassion.
Only wanting the child to get its fill,
The compassionate mother doesn't speak
of her own hunger.

5. THE KINDNESS OF MOVING THE CHILD TO A DRY PLACE AND LYING IN THE WET HERSELF

The mother is willing to be wet
So that the child can be dry.
With her two breasts she satisfies its
hunger and thirst;
Covering it with her sleeve, she protects
it from the wind and cold.
In kindness, her head rarely rests
on the pillow,
And yet she does this happily.
So long as the child is comfortable,
The kind mother seeks no solace for herself.

6. THE KINDNESS OF SUCKLING THE CHILD AT HER BREAST AND NOURISHING AND BRINGING UP THE CHILD

The kind mother is like the great earth.
The stern father is like the encompassing
heaven:
One covers from above; the other supports
from below.
The kindness of parents is such that

They know no hatred or anger toward
their offspring,
And are not displeased, even if the
child is born crippled.
After the mother carries the child in
her womb and gives birth to it,
The parents care for and protect it
together until the end of their days.

7. THE KINDNESS OF WASHING AWAY THE UNCLEAN

Originally she had a pretty face and a
beautiful body,
Her spirit was strong and vibrant.
Her eyebrows were like fresh green
willows,
And her complexion would have put a
red rose to shame.
But her kindness is so deep she will
forego a beautiful face.
Although washing away the filth injures
her constitution,
The kind mother acts solely for the
sake of her sons and daughters
And willingly allows her beauty to fade.

8. THE KINDNESS OF ALWAYS THINKING OF THE CHILD WHEN IT HAS TRAVELED FAR

The death of loved ones is difficult
to endure.
But separation is also painful.
When the child travels afar,
The mother worries in her village.
From morning until night, her heart is
with her child,
And a thousand tears fall from her eyes.
Like the monkey weeping silently in
love for her child,
Bit-by-bit her heart is broken.

9. THE KINDNESS OF DEEP CARE AND DEVOTION

How heavy is the parents' kindness and
emotional concern!
Their kindness is deep and difficult to
repay.
Willingly they undergo suffering on their
child's behalf.
If the child toils, the parents are
uncomfortable.
If they hear that he has traveled afar,

They worry that at night he will have
to lie in the cold.
Even a moment's pain suffered by
their sons or daughters
Will cause the parents sustained distress.

10. THE KINDNESS OF ULTIMATE PITY AND SYMPATHY

The kindness of parents is profound and
important.
Their tender concern never ceases.
From the moment they awake each day,
their thoughts are with their children.
Whether the children are near or far away,
the parents think of them often.
Even if a mother lives for a hundred
years,
She will constantly worry about her
eighty-year-old child!
Do you wish to know when such kindness
and love ends?
It doesn't even begin to dissipate
until her life is over.

The Buddha told Ananda, "When I contemplate living beings, I see that although they are born

as human beings, nonetheless, they are stupid and dull in their thoughts and actions. They don't consider their parents' great kindness and virtue. They are disrespectful and turn their backs on kindness and what is right. They lack humaneness and are neither filial nor compliant.

For ten months while the mother is with child, she feels discomfort each time she rises, as if she were lifting a heavy burden. Like a chronic invalid, she is unable to keep her food and drink down. When the ten months have passed and the time comes for the birth, she undergoes all kinds of pain and suffering so that the child can be born. She is afraid of her own mortality, like a pig or lamb waiting to be slaughtered. Then the blood flows all over the ground. These are the sufferings she undergoes.

Once the child is born, she saves what is sweet for him and swallows what is bitter herself. She carries the child and nourishes it, washing away its filth. There is no toil or difficulty that she does not willingly undertake for the sake of her child. She endures both cold and heat and never even mentions what she has gone through. She gives the dry place to her child and sleeps in the

damp herself. For three years she nourishes the baby with milk, which is transformed from the blood of her own body.

Parents continually instruct and guide their children in the ways of propriety and morality as the youngsters mature into adults. They arrange marriages for them and provide them with property and wealth or devise ways to get it for them. They take this responsibility and trouble upon themselves with tremendous zeal and toil, never speaking about their care and kindness.

When a son or daughter becomes ill, parents are worried and afraid to the point that they may even grow ill themselves. They remain by the child's side providing constant care, and only when the child gets well are the parents happy once again. In this way, they care for and raise their children with the sustained hope that their offspring will soon grow to be mature adults.

How sad that all too often the children are unfilial in return! In speaking with relatives whom they should honor, the children display no compliance. When they ought to be polite, they have no manners. They glare at those whom they should venerate, and insult their uncles and aunts. They scold their siblings and destroy any family

feeling that might have existed among them. Children like that have no respect or sense of propriety.

Children may be well taught, but if they are unfilial, they will not heed the instructions or obey the rules. Rarely will they rely upon the guidance of their parents. They are contrary and rebellious when interacting with their brothers. They come and go from home without ever reporting to their parents. Their speech and actions are very arrogant and they act on impulse without consulting others. Such children ignore the admonishments and punishments set down by their parents and pay no regard to their uncles' warnings. Yet, at the same time, they are immature and always need to be looked after and protected by their elders.

As such children grow up, they become more and more obstinate and uncontrollable. They are entirely ungrateful and totally contrary. They are defiant and hateful, rejecting both family and friends. They befriend evil people and under their influence soon adopt the same kinds of bad habits. They come to take what is false to be true.

Such children may be enticed by others to leave their families and run away to live in other towns, thus denouncing their parents and rejecting

their native town. They may become salesmen or civil servants who languish in comfort and luxury. They may marry in haste and that new bond provides yet another obstruction which prevents them from returning home for long periods of time.

Or, in going to live in other towns, these children may be incautious and find themselves plotted against or accused of doing evil. They may be unfairly locked up in prison. Or they may meet with illness and become enmeshed in disasters and hardships, subject to the terrible pain of poverty, starvation, and emaciation. Yet no one there will care for them. Being scorned and disliked by others, they will be abandoned on the street. In such circumstances, their lives may come to an end. No one bothers to try to save them. Their bodies swell up, rot, decay, and are exposed to the sun and blown away by the wind. The white bones entirely disintegrate and scatter as these children come to their final rest in the dirt of some other town. These children will never again have a happy reunion with their relatives and kin. Nor will they ever know how their aging parents mourn for and worry about them. The parents may grow blind from weeping or become sick from extreme

grief and despair. Constantly dwelling on the memory of their children, they may pass away, but even when they become ghosts, their souls still cling to this attachment and are unable to let it go.

Others of these unfilial children may not aspire to learning, but instead become interested in strange and bizarre doctrines. Such children may be villainous, coarse, and stubborn, delighting in practices that are utterly devoid of benefit. They may become involved in fights and thefts, setting themselves at odds with the town by drinking and gambling. As if their own debauchery were not enough, they drag their brothers into it as well, to the further distress of their parents.

If such children do live at home, they leave early in the morning and do not return until late at night. Never do they ask about the welfare of their parents or make sure that they don't suffer from heat or cold. They do not inquire after their parents' well being in the morning or the evening, nor even on the first and fifteenth of the lunar month. In fact, it never occurs to these unfilial children to ever ask whether their parents have slept comfortably or rested peacefully. Such children are simply not concerned in the least

about their parents' well being. When the parents of such children grow old and their appearance becomes more and more withered and emaciated, they are made to feel ashamed to be seen in public and are subjected to abuse and oppression.

Such unfilial children may end up with a father who is a widower or a mother who is a widow. The solitary parents are left alone in empty houses, feeling like guests in their own homes. They may endure cold and hunger, but no one takes heed of their plight. They may weep incessantly from morning to night, sighing and lamenting. It's only right that children should provide for aging parents with food and drink of delicious flavors, but irresponsible children are sure to overlook their duties. If they ever do attempt to help their parents out in any way, they feel embarrassed and are afraid people will laugh at them. Yet, such offspring may lavish wealth and food on their own wives and children, disregarding the toil and weariness involved in doing so. Other unfilial offspring may be so intimidated by their wives that they go along with all of their wishes. But when appealed to by their parents and elders, they ig-

nore them and are totally unfazed by their pleas.

It may be the case that daughters were quite filial to their parents before their own marriages, but that they become progressively rebellious after they marry. This situation may be so extreme that if their parents show even the slightest signs of displeasure, the daughters become hateful and vengeful toward them. Yet they bear their husband's scolding and beatings with sweet tempers, even though their spouses are outsiders with other surnames and family ties. The emotional bonds between such couples are deeply entangled, and yet those daughters hold their parents at a distance. They may follow their husbands and move to other towns, leaving their parents behind entirely. They do not long for them and simply cut off all communication with them. When the parents continue to hear no word from their daughters, they feel incessant anxiety. They become so fraught with sorrow that it is as if they were suspended upside down. Their every thought is of seeing their children, just as one who is thirsty longs for something to drink. Their kind thoughts for their offspring never cease.

The virtue of one's parents' kindness is boundless and limitless. If one has made the mistake of being unfilial, how difficult it is to repay that kindness!"

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the depth of one's parents' kindness, everyone in the Great Assembly threw themselves on the ground and began beating their breasts and striking themselves until all their hairpores flowed with blood. Some fell unconscious to the ground, while others stamped their feet in grief. It was a long time before they could control themselves. With loud voices they lamented, "Such suffering! What suffering! How painful! How painful! We are all offenders. We are criminals who have never awakened, like those who travel in a dark night. We have just now understood our offenses and our very insides are torn to bits. We only hope that the World Honored One will pity us and save us. Please tell us how we can repay the deep kindness of our parents!"

At that time the Tathagata used eight kinds of profoundly deep and pure sounds to speak to the assembly. "All of you should know this. I will

now explain for you the various aspects of this matter.

"If there were a person who carried his father on his left shoulder and his mother on his right shoulder until his bones were ground to powder by their weight as they bore through to the marrow, and if that person were to circumambulate Mount Sumeru for a hundred thousand kalpas until the blood that flowed out from his feet covered his ankles, that person would still not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, during the period of a kalpa fraught with famine and starvation, sliced the flesh off his own body to feed his parents and did this as many times as there are dust motes as he passed through hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, took a sharp knife and cut out his eyes and made an offering of them to the Tathagatas, and continued to do that for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his father and mother, used a sharp knife to cut out his heart and liver so that the blood flowed and covered the ground and if he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, never once complaining about the pain, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, took a hundred thousand swords and stabbed his body with them all at once so that they entered one side and came out the other, and if he continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, beat his bones down to the marrow and continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents.

"If there were a person who, for the sake of his parents, swallowed molten iron pellets and continued in this way to do this for hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the deep kindness of his parents."

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the kindness and virtue of parents, everyone in the Great Assembly wept silent tears and felt searing pain in their hearts. They reflected deeply, simultaneously brought forth shame and said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, how can we repay the deep kindness of our parents?"

The Buddha replied, "Disciples of the Buddha, if you wish to repay your parents' kindness, write out this Sutra on their behalf. Recite this Sutra on their behalf. Repent of transgressions and offenses on their behalf. For the sake of your parents, make offerings to the Triple Jewel. For the sake of your parents, hold the precept of pure eating. For the sake of your parents, practice giving and cultivate blessings. If you are able to do these things, you are being a filial child. If you do not do these things, you are a person destined for the hells."

The Buddha told Ananda, "If a person is not filial, when his life ends and his body decays, he will fall into the Spaceless, Avici Hell. This great hell is eighty thousand yojanas in circumference and is surrounded on all four sides by iron

walls. Above, it is covered over by nets, and the ground is also made of iron. A mass of fire burns fiercely, while thunder roars and bright bolts of lightning set things afire. Molten brass and iron fluids are poured over the offenders' bodies. Brass dogs and iron snakes constantly spew out fire and smoke which burns the offenders and broils their flesh and fat to a pulp.

"Oh, such suffering! Difficult to take, difficult to bear! There are poles, hooks, spears, and lances, iron halberds and iron chains, iron hammers, and iron awls. Wheels of iron knives rain down from the air. The offender is chopped, hacked, or stabbed, and undergoes these cruel punishments for kalpas without respite. Then they enter the remaining hells, where their heads are capped with fiery basins, while iron wheels roll over their bodies, passing both horizontally and vertically until their guts are ripped open and their bones and flesh are squashed to a pulp. Within a single day, they experience myriad births and myriad deaths. Such sufferings are a result of committing the five rebellious acts and of being unfilial when one was alive."

At that time, upon hearing the Buddha speak about the virtue of parents' kindness, everyone in the Great Assembly wept sorrowfully and addressed the Tathagata, "On this day, how can we repay the deep kindness of our parents?"

The Buddha said, "Disciples of the Buddha, if you wish to repay their kindness, then for the sake of your parents print this Sutra. This is truly repaying their kindness. If one can print one copy, then one will get to see one Buddha. If one can print ten copies, then one will get to see ten Buddhas. If one can print one hundred copies, then one will get to see one hundred Buddhas. If one can print one thousand copies, then one will get to see one thousand Buddhas. If one can print ten thousand copies, then one will get to see ten thousand Buddhas. This is the power derived when good people print Sutras. All Buddhas will forever protect such people with their kindness and can immediately cause the parents of such people to be reborn in the heavens, to enjoy all kinds of happiness, and to leave behind the sufferings of the hells."

At that time, Ananda and the rest of the Great Assembly--the asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas,

people, non-people, and others, as well as the gods, dragons, yakshas, gandarvas, wheel-turning sage kings, and all the lesser kings--felt all the hairs on their bodies stand on end when they heard what the Buddha had said. They wept grievously and were unable to stop themselves. Each one of them made a vow saying, "All of us, from now until the exhaustion of the bounds of the future, would rather that our bodies be pulverized into small particles of dust for a hundred thousand kalpas, than to ever go against the Thus Come One's sagely teachings. We would rather that our tongues be plucked out, so that they would extend for a full yojana, and that for a hundred thousand kalpas an iron plough would run over them; we would rather have a hundred-thousand bladed wheel roll freely over our bodies, than ever go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings. We would rather that our bodies be ensnared in an iron net for a hundred thousand kalpas, than ever go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings. We would rather that for a hundred thousand kalpas our bodies would be chopped, hacked, mutilated, and chiselled into ten million pieces so that our skin, flesh, joints, and bones would be completely disintegrated, than ever

go against the Tathagata's sagely teachings."

At that time, Ananda, with dignity and a sense of peace, rose from his seat and asked the Buddha, "World Honored One, what name shall this Sutra have when we accord with it and uphold it?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "This Sutra is called *THE SUTRA ABOUT THE DEEP KINDNESS OF PARENTS AND THE DIFFICULTY OF REPAYING IT*. Use this name when you accord with it and uphold it."

At that time, the Great Assembly, the gods, humans, asuras, and the others, hearing what the Buddha had said, were completely delighted. They believed it, received it, and offered up their conduct in accord with it, and then bowed and withdrew.

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA ON CAUSE AND EFFECT IN THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

Translated by Bhikshuni Heng Tao
Reviewed by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih
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At that time, Ananda was on Magic Mountain, together with twelve hundred fifty in the assembly. Ananda made obeisance with his palms together, circumambulated the Buddha three times, and knelt with his palms joined. Then he asked Shakyamuni Buddha this question: "During the Dharma-Ending Age, all the living beings in Southern Jambudvipa will give rise to much unwholesome karma. They will not revere the Triple Jewel, or respect their parents. They will be lacking in the Three Bonds.[1] The Five Constants[2] that safeguard the universal obligations between people will be in disharmony and disarray. Beings will be poor, destitute, lowly, and vile. Their six faculties will suffer impairment. All day long they will engage in killing and harming. Moreover, they will not be of equal status; some will be wealthy

[1] The "Three Bonds" refers to the relationship between ruler and minister, between father and son, and between husband and wife.

[2] The Five Constants are humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trusthworthiness.

while others will be poor. What are the conditions leading to these various different rewards and retributions? We disciples pray that the World Honored One will compassionately explain each one of these for us."

The Buddha told Ananda and the assembly of great disciples, "You should now listen attentively. Good indeed, good indeed! I will clearly set forth all of this for you. All men and women of the world, whether they be poor and lowly or wealthy and noble, whether they be undergoing limitless sufferings or enjoying blessings without end, are all undergoing the rewards or retributions which are due to causes and effects from their past lives. What should they do from now on?

"First, they should be filial and respectful to their parents. Next, they should reverently believe in the Triple Jewel. Third, they should refrain from killing and instead liberate the living. Fourth, they should eat pure vegetarian food and practice giving. These acts will enable them to plant seeds in the field of blessings for their future lives."

Then the Buddha spoke these verses on cause and effect:

Wealth and dignity come from one's destiny
From causes planted in lives in the past.
People who hold to this simple principle
Will reap good fortune in lives in the future.
Kind men and women, listen to the causes,
Hear and remember this Sutra's reminder
Of the causes and effects of karmic deeds
In the past, in the future, and in the present.
Cause and effect is no small care.
True are my words; don't take them lightly.
Why are some people officials at present?
Because with gold they gilded the Buddhas
In their past lives, long long ago.
It's from their practice in lives in the past
That they reap in this life a rich fruition.
The purple gown and golden cordon--
The honored marks of higher office:
Should you seek them, seek with the Buddhas.
Gilding the Buddhas is your own gain;
Robing Thus Come Ones, you robe yourself.
Don't say it's easy to become an official;
It cannot happen if causes aren't planted.

What are the causes of owning a carriage
And riding on palanquins? People like that
Were builders and menders of bridges and roads.

Why are some people wearers of satin?
That is because in times in the past,
Robes they gave as gifts to the Sangha.

Sometimes people have plentiful goods,
The reason, in fact, again is quite fair.
In the past those people gave food to the poor.

Others don't have food or drink,
Who can guess the reason why?
Before those people were plagued with a fault:
Stingy greed made them squeeze every penny.

The well-to-do among us dwell
In very tall mansions and vast estates.
The reason is they gladly gave rice,
Lavishing gifts of grain on monasteries.

Enjoying blessings and justly prosperous,
Are people who reap a fitting reward.
In times now past they helped build temples
And saw that the Sangha had huts and shelters.

Some people's features are fine and perfect.
Surely the reason for such rewards
Is that beautiful flowers they offered to
Buddhas

Why are some people gifted and wise?
In former lives they ate pure food
And remembered the Buddhas with mindful regard.

Look at men whose wives are loyal,
Their reward comes now for what happened before:
Their conditions are strong in the Buddha's door.

Some have marriages lasting and meaningful.
Their happiness doesn't happen by chance.
The cause this time is the hanging of canopies
And streamers before the Buddhas' statues.

Some happy fellows' fathers and mothers
Enjoy long lifespans, contentment, and ease.
Where is the source for rewards such as these?
They protected orphans in times now past
And regarded all elderly ones as their own.

Orphans must live without fathers and mothers
Since before they shot down birds for sport.

How does one get lots of children and grand-
children?
By letting birds fly from their cages to
freedom.

In raising children, some really fail badly.
It's because before they drowned female infants.

When barren, people won't bear any children.
That's their due for committing promiscuous
deeds.

Some have long lifespans, why are they lucky?
Liberating creatures, they ransomed lives.

Have you seen how many suffer short lifespans?
Their wanton slaughter of beings is why.

Lonely are men whom no women will marry.
They're paying their debt for committing adultery.

Widows bear a sad retribution.
They held their past lives' husbands in scorn.

Servants and slaves made that bondage themselves
By neglecting repayment of goodnesses done them.

Bright are the eyes of some fortunate beings.
Before Buddhas they offered lamps filled with oil
The blind of this world bear a heavy burden
For past failure to tell the way clearly to travellers.
Some people's mouths are very misshapen.
They blew out lamps on the Buddhas' altars.
To be deaf and mute is a dreary existence.
Reward appropriate for scolding one's parents.
How do people get to be hunchbacks?
They berated and laughed at those bowing to Buddhas.
Take heed of malformed hands, my friend.
They betray people prone to evil.
Fellows with crippled and useless feet
Ambushed and robbed with reckless abandon.
Most cows and horses were humans before--
People who didn't settle their debts.
Many former people are now pigs or dogs
Because they injured and cheated others.

Illness and pain: an effect inevitable
For bestowing meat and wine on the Buddhas.

Freedom from illness: a fine reward
For relieving the sick by bestowing medicines.

The fate of imprisonment catches some people
Due to fiendish deeds and a failure to yield.

Death by starvation: due retribution
For stopping up holes of rats and snakes.

Appropriate that a victim of poisoning
Caused aquatic poisoning; dammed up waters.

Abandoned, forlorn, rejected beings
Were cruel of old, abusing others.

The stature of some is extremely short.
Before, they read Sutras spread out on the floor.

Vomiting blood? Believe it's from first
Eating meat, then reciting the Sutras.

Another deed that determines deafness:
To not listen well to Sutra recitals.

Sores and scabies bother some people
Who gave stinking fish and flesh to the Buddhas.

People who reek with a terrible stench
Sold inferior scents and phony goods.

Why do some by their own hand hang themselves?
Before, they used nooses to capture their prey.

All those widowed, alone, unwed, or orphaned,
Are now paid justly for former jealousy.

Those struck by lightning, consumed by fire,
Rigged their scales to better their business
income.

Fierce tigers and snakes that feast on people
Are enemies bearing resentments from lives before.

In our myriad deeds, whatever we do,
We reap our own rewards, it's true.

Who can we blame for our woe in the hells?
Who can there be to blame but ourselves?

Don't say that cause and effect is unseen.
Look at you, your offspring, heirs, and grand-
children.
If you doubt the good of pure eating and giving,
Look around and find those enjoying fortune.
Having practiced of old, they now harvest
abundance.

To cultivate now will bring blessings anew.
Those who slander the cause and effect in this Sutra
Will fall and have no chance to be human.

Those who recite and uphold this Sutra
Are supported by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Write out this Sutra, study it hard
And in the future your families will flourish.

Uphold this Sutra atop your heads
To avert disasters and fatal accidents.
To lecture this Sutra on Cause and Effect
Is to sharpen your wits in successive rebirths.

Chanting this Sutra on Cause and Effect
Will make one revered, well-regarded by all.

Print and distribute this precious Sutra
And reap rebirth as a ruler or king.

To verify former cause and effect,
Regard Mahakashyapa's golden body.
A case of future cause and effect:
Bhikshu Good Star slandered the Dharma
And lost his chance for human life.

If cause and effect contained no truth,
Why did Maudgalyayana seek to rescue his mother
From the hells to save her from suffering?
Those who trust the words of this Sutra as true,
Will all be reborn in the Western Land of Bliss.
To speak of present cause and effect
To proclaim future and past as well,
Is a deed that could never be done to its end.
Join at the door of the Triple Gem.
With blessings and wholesome belief one can enter
The door, supported by gods and dragons,
Dragons and gods who won't let you down.
For every part of giving you practice,
You'll reap ten thousand parts reward.
Such blessings are stored in a solid treasury,
For enjoyment in future rebirths without end.
If you care to know of past live's causes,
Look at rewards you are reaping today.
If you wish to find out about future lives,
You need but notice what you're doing right now.

END OF THE BUDDHA SPEAKS
THE SUTRA ON CAUSE AND EFFECT
IN THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME

THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF THE CHANGES TO COME SUTRA

THUS I HAVE HEARD. AT ONE TIME THE BUDDHA WAS IN SHRAVASTI IN THE JETA GROVE, IN THE GARDEN OF THE BENEFACTOR OF ORPHANS AND THE SOLITARY, TOGETHER WITH A GATHERING OF GREAT BHIKSHUS, FIVE HUNDRED IN ALL, AS WELL AS ALL THE BODHISATTVAS.

AT THAT TIME THE WORLD HONORED ONE TOLD ALL THE BHIKSHUS, "IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE BHIKSHUS WHO WILL FAIL TO BE TRANSFORMED BY THE DHARMA FOR A SET OF SPECIFIC REASONS, THUS BRINGING THE DHARMA TO RUIN AND PREVENTING ITS INCREASE AND GROWTH. WHAT ARE THESE REASONS? THEY ARE: NOT PROTECTING THE PROHIBITIONS AND MORAL PRECEPTS, NOT BEING ABLE TO GUARD THE MIND,NOT CULTIVATING WISDOM, BEING LAX IN THOUGHT, ONLY SEEKING FOR A GOOD REPUTATION, NOT FOLLOWING THE TEACHINGS OF THE WAY, AND BEING

UNWILLING TO DILIGENTLY HONOR THE DEEDS WHICH RESCUE THOSE OF THE WORLD. ALL THESE COMPRISE THE FIRST MATTER WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION."

THE BUDDHA TOLD THE BHIKSHUS, "IN ADDITION, THERE ARE TWO OTHER MATTERS WHICH WILL CAUSE THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION. THE FIRST IS NOT PROTECTING THE MORAL PROHIBITIONS, NOT GATHERING IN THE MIND, AND NOT CULTIVATING WISDOM. INDULGING IN DISSOLUTE ATTITUDES AND LICENTIOUS INTENTIONS, BHIKSHUS WILL TAKE WIVES AND RAISE CHILDREN, AND ENGAGE IN BUSINESS TO MAKE A LIVING. THE SECOND IS FORMING SECTS AND PARTIES, GIVING RISE TO ENMITY AND COMPETITION, AND WISHING TO CAUSE DHARMA PEERS TO FALL. ABUSING PROPER LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSES, BHIKSHUS WILL INDULGE IN FLATTERY AND DECEIT. INTERNALLY CREATING EVIL DEEDS, OUTWARDLY THEY WILL PRETEND TO BE OF PURE CONDUCT. THESE COMPRISE TWO OTHER MATTERS WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION."

THE BUDDHA TOLD THE BHIKSHUS, "IN ADDITION, THERE ARE THREE OTHER MATTERS THAT WILL CAUSE THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION. THE FIRST IS A FAILURE TO PROTECT THE PROHIBITIONS AND PRECEPTS, TO GATHER IN THE MIND AND TO CULTIVATE WISDOM. THE SECOND

IS AN INABILITY TO KNOW THE PROPER SEQUENCE OF SENTENCES ON THE PART OF PEOPLE WHO READ LITERATURE OF THE DHARMA. THEY WILL PUT WHAT COMES FIRST IN THE PLACE OF WHAT COMES LATER, AND WILL PUT WHAT COMES LATER IN THE PLACE OF WHAT COMES FIRST, AND VICE VERSA. BY INVERTING THE ORDER OF THE BEGINNINGS AND THE ENDINGS LIKE THIS, THEY WON'T UNDERSTAND WHERE THE TEACHINGS LEAD TO, YET THEY WILL ASSUME THAT THEIR UNDERSTANDINGS ARE CORRECT. THE THIRD IS A REFUSAL TO LISTEN TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO CORRECT THEM, BUT INSTEAD THEY HARBOR FEELINGS OF HATRED, RESENTMENT, AND JEALOUSY TOWARDS THEM. PEOPLE WHO RECOGNIZE THE TEACHINGS WILL BE FEW. THE MAJORITY WILL BE UNABLE TO DISCERN THE PRINCIPLES, BUT WILL SIMPLY FOLLOW ALONG WITH THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS. THESE COMPRISE THE THREE OTHER MATTERS THAT WILL BRING ABOUT THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION."

THE BUDDHA TOLD THE BHIKSHUS, "THERE ARE ALSO FOUR OTHER MATTERS WHICH WILL CAUSE THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION. WHAT ARE THEY? THE FIRST IS THAT IN THE FUTURE, THERE WILL BE BHIKSHUS WHO, HAVING RENOUNCED THE LIVELIHOOD OF HOUSE-HOLDERS, WILL GO TO AN ARANYA BUT WILL FAIL TO CULTIVATE THE WAY. THE SECOND IS THAT THEY WILL ENJOY SOCIALIZING IN NOISY PLACES WITH COMMON PEOPLE, WANDERING AS THEY PLEASE, AND ENGAGING IN CASUAL TALK. THEY WILL SEEK

FINE CLOTHING AND WEAR PRECEPT SASHES MADE OF MULTI-COLORED CLOTH. THE THIRD IS THAT THEY WILL AFFECT THE MANNERS OF THE ELITE, AND MAKE PRETENSE TO LOFTY VISION AND VAST KNOWLEDGE. THEY WILL CLAIM HIGH VIRTUE FOR THEMSELVES AND CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE INFERIOR. AND THOUGH POSSESSING FRAGMENTED WISDOM, THEY WILL COMPARE THEMSELVES TO THE BRILLIANCE OF THE SUN AND THE MOON. THE FOURTH IS THAT THEY WILL NOT GATHER IN THE THREE KARMAS,NOR PROTECT THE GATES OF THE SENSE ORGANS. THEY WILL TRAVEL AMONG WOMEN AND PROPOGATE LITERATURE WITH ERUDITE EMBROIDERED PHRASING. THEY WILL SPEAK MUCH OF COUPLING AND MARRIAGE IN ORDER TO MOVE PEOPLE'S MINDS, THUS CAUSING THE PURE TO BECOME DEFILED. THEY WILL PRACTICE PROFLIGACY AND RECKLESS BEHAVIOR. THUS THE PROPER DHARMA WILL GO TO RUIN. AND THESE ARE THE FOUR MATTERS WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION."

THE BUDDHA TOLD THE BHIKSHUS,"AND FURTHERMORE THERE ARE FIVE OTHER MATTERS THAT WILL CAUSE THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION. WHAT ARE THEY? THE FIRST IS THAT SOME BHIKSHUS WHO ORIGINALLY LEFT HOME TO CULTIVATE THE WAY BECAUSE OF THE DHARMA,WILL SUBSEQUENTLY ABUSE AND ABOLISH THE TEACHINGS OF THE

OF THE PROFOUND SUTRAS, SUCH AS THE TWELVE LINKS, THE THIRTY-SEVEN LIMBS, THE VAIPULYA, THE DEEP AND WONDERFUL ESOTERIC WISDOM OF EMPTINESS, THE UNSURPASSED PERFECTION OF WISDOM, THE WHOLESOME PROVISIONAL DEVICES AND EXPEDIENT MEANS, THE EMPTY, MARKLESS, AND WISHLESS, AND THE ULTIMATE MEANS OF BRINGING ABOUT TIMELY TRANSFORMATIONS. THE SECOND IS THAT THEY WILL INSTEAD TURN TO THE PRACTICE OF RANDOM PHRASES, SHALLOW BRANCHES, AND LESSER SUTRAS. BECAUSE THEY MIX WITH THE MUNDANE WORLD AND LEAD WORLDLY LIVES, THEY WILL ALLOW THE CLASSICS AND MANIFESTOS OF KINGS TO BECOME A SOURCE OF CHAOS WITHIN THE WAY. BHIKSHUS WILL ENJOY DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS AND BECOME SKILLED AT EXPLAINING WORLDLY AFFAIRS. THEY WILL KNOW HOW TO WIN PEOPLE'S APPROVAL BY PLEASING, THUS GAINING FAME ANF REPUTATION FOR THEMSELVES. THE THIRD IS THAT THEY WILL READILY EMPLOY THE IDEAS OF SCHOLARS WITH SHALLOW UNDERSTANDING, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE ONLY STUDIED THE DHARMA BRIEFLY, PREFERRING THEM OVER THOSE OF SCHOLARS WHO POSSESS PROFOUND PENETRATION OF THE TEACHINGS. THE FOURTH IS THAT THEY WILL DISPLEASE THE GODS, DRAGONS, GHOSTS, AND SPIRITS. WITH HEARTS FULL OF SORROW, THE GODS WILL SAY, "THIS IS THE DHARMA ENDING AGE AND THAT IS WHY THINGS ARE THIS

WAY." FORSAKING THE TEACHINGS OF THE WONDERFUL DHARMA, THESE BHIKSHUS WILL ONLY PROPOGATE FRAGMENTED SENTENCES, ALL THE GODS WILL WEEP AND QUICKLY DEPART. THE FIFTH IS THAT FROM THAT TIME ON, THE PROPER DHARMA WILL BE SCARCE AND NO ONE WILL CULTIVATE IT WITH VIGOR. AND THESE COMPRISE THE FIVE MATTERS THAT WILL BRING ABOUT THE DHARMA'S EXTINCTION.,

THE BUDDHA TOLD THE BHIKSHUS, "AFTER MY NIRVANA, THESE DEVIANT DEEDS AND FIFTEEN DISORDERS WILL BRING THE DHARMA TO EXTINCTION. HOW PAINFUL IT IS! IF THERE ARE BHIKSHUS AMONG YOU WHO SINCERELY WISH TO REVERENTLY STUDY THE WAY, YOU SHOULD THROW OUT ALL EMBROIDERY AND DECORATION, AND NOT SEEK FAME OR REPUTATION. BUT WITH A NATURE THAT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND INNOCENT, YOU SHOULD GUARD THE TRUE AND PROPOGATE THE ORTHODOX SUTRAS, THE EXALTED CANON OF THE BUDDHA, AND THE PROFOUND TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE DHARMA, BUT AVOID USING TOO MANY WORDS IN EXPLAINING THEM. YOU SHOULD RELY ON THE ORIGINAL EXPLANATION IN THE SUTRAS;NOT ABANDON THE PROPER PHRASINGS. IN USING SPECIAL TERMS AND REPETITIONS, YOU SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE BUDDHA'S INTENT TO BECOME LOST. AS TO FOOD AND CLOTHING, YOU SHOULD NOT BE PLEASED WITH GOOD OFFERINGS NOR DESPISE

MEAN OFFERINGS BUT ACCORD WITH THE WISHES OF THE DONORS. YOU SHOULD BE NEITHER DELIGHTED NOR DISPLEASED WITH THE QUALITY OF OFFERINGS OF FOOD AND CLOTHING, WHETHER FINE OR COARSE.

"YOU SHOULD GATHER IN BODY, MOUTH, AND MIND, AND GUARD THE SENSE GATES. YOU SHOULD NOT TURN FROM THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS, BUT BE MINDFUL OF LIFE'S BREVITY, FOR IT'S OVER IN A FLASH. IT IS LIKE A VISION SEEN IN A DREAM; UPON AWAKENING ONE CANNOT RECALL WHERE IT WENT. THE SUFFERING OF THE THREE EVIL DESTINIES CANNOT BE RECKONED. DILIGENTLY CULTIVATE THE BUDDHADHARMA AS IF SAVING YOUR OWN HEAD!

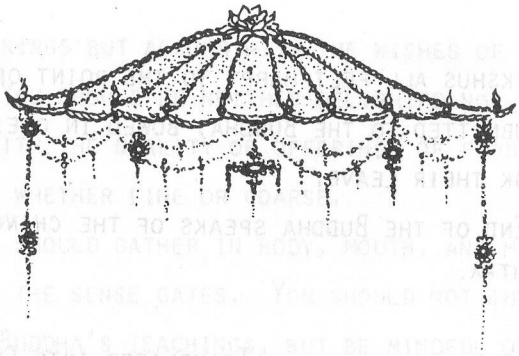
"THE FIVE PRECEPTS, THE TEN GOOD ACTS, THE SIX PARAMITAS, THE TEN THOUSAND CONDUCTS, THE FOUR UNLIMITED MINDS, THE FOUR KINDS OF KINDNESS, WISDOM, AND EXPEDIENT MEANS MUST ALL BE PRACTICED WITH VIGOR. THEN EVEN THOUGH YOU MAY NOT MEET WITH A BUDDHA IN THE WORLD, NONETHELESS, YOUR LEAVING HOME AND STUDYING THE WAY WILL NOT BE IN VAIN. YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR ORIGINAL MIND LEVEL AND EQUAL. WITH SYMPATHY, BE MINDFUL OF ALL BEINGS AND TREAT EVERYONE WITH KINDNESS."

AFTER THE BUDDHA INSTRUCTED THEM IN THIS WAY,

THE BHIKSHUS ALL FELT HAPPY TO THE POINT OF TEARS. THEY SUBMITTED TO THE BUDDHA, BOWED IN OBEISANCE, AND TOOK THEIR LEAVE.

END OF THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF THE *CHANGES TO COME SUTRA*.

TRANSLATED INTO CHINESE
BY TRIPITAKA MASTER
DHARMARAKSHA OF KASANA OF
WESTERN CHIN DYNASTY
(265-313 A.D.)



迴向文

願莊嚴此功德◎
以此功德◎
普及於一切
我等與衆生
皆共成佛道

Verse of Transference

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi,
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in ultimate bliss.

劉居士
敬印壹萬本
回向給父母劉款
黃綏
往生至淨土
離苦而得樂

回向偈(一)
VERSE OF TRANSFERENCE
(Optional 1)

YUÀN YǏ CǏ GŌNG DÉ
愿 以 此 功 德 。
May this act of merit and virtue,

HUÍ XIÀNG YÚ YÍ QIÈ
回 向 于 一 切 。
be dedicated to all.

WǑ DĚNG YǓ ZHÒNG SHĒNG
我 等 与 众 生 。
May we and all sentient beings,

JIE GÒNG CHÉNG FÓ DÀO
皆 共 成 佛 道 。
together attain Buddhahood.

回向偈(二)
VERSE OF TRANSFERENCE
(Optional 2)

YUÀN XIĀO SĀN ZHÀNG ZHŪ FÁN NǍO
愿 消 三 障 诸 烦 恼 。
We wish to rid ourselves of the three hindrances and all klesas

YUÀN DÉ ZHÌ HUÌ ZHĒN MÍNG LIǍO
愿 得 智 慧 真 明 了 。
We wish to gain wisdom and real understanding.

PǓ YUÀN ZUÌ ZHÀNG XĪ XIĀO CHÚ
普 愿 罪 障 悉 消 除 。
We wish all sinful hindrances to be totally eradicated.

SHÌ SHÌ CHÁNG XÍNG PÚ SÀ DÀO
世 世 常 行 菩 萨 道 。
In one life after another, we always follow the Bodhisattvas' paths.

有人講說因果經　生生世世得聰明　有人高唱因果經　來生人都愛恭敬
有人印送因果經　來世便得帝王身　若問前世因果經　武帝前生是何人
若問後世因果經　鄯氏墜落蟒蛇身　若是因果無感應　目連救母是何因
若人深信因果經　同生西方極樂國　三世因果說不盡　龍天不虧善心人

今生缺脚爲何因　前世攔路打劫人
今生猪狗爲何因　前世皆因騙害人
今生無病爲何因　前世施藥救病人
今生餓死爲何因　前世閉塞蛇鼠人
伶仃孤苦爲何因　前世惡心侵算人
今生吐血爲何因　前世喫肉念經人
今生瘡癩爲何因　前世買肉佛前薰
今生弔死爲何因　前世繫索去山林
雷打火燒爲何因　大秤小斗不公平
萬般自作還自受　地獄受苦怨何人
不信喫齋多脩捨　但看眼前受福人
若人毀謗因果經　後世墜落無人身
有人書寫因果經　世代兒孫家道興

今生牛馬爲何因　前世欠債不還人
今生多病爲何因　前世酒肉供佛人
今生坐牢爲何因　前世作惡不讓人
毒藥死者爲何因　前世攔河毒魚人
今生寒餒爲何因　前世地下看經文
今生耳聾爲何因　前世誦經不悉聽
今生臭氣爲何因　前世和香賣不眞
鰥寡孤獨爲何因　前世蛆心疾垢人
虎咬蛇傷爲何因　前世寃家對頭人
莫道因果無人見　遠在兒孫近在身
前世脩來今世受　今生脩積後世人
有人受持因果經　諸佛菩薩作証明
有人頂戴因果經　凶災橫禍不臨身

騎馬坐轎爲何因　前世脩橋補路人
有食有穿爲何因　前世茶飯施貧人
高堂大厦爲何因　前世施米上菴門
相貌端嚴爲何因　前世採花供佛前
妻賢女淑爲何因　前世佛門結緣人
父母雙全爲何因　前世憐恤孤獨人
多子多孫爲何因　前世開籠放鳥人
今生無子爲何因　前世採毀百花身
今生短命爲何因　前世宰殺衆生身
今生守寡爲何因　前世輕賤丈夫身
今生眼明爲何因　前世買油點佛燈
今生缺口爲何因　前世吹滅佛前燈
今生駝背爲何因　前世笑了拜佛人

穿綢穿緞爲何因　前世施衣濟僧人
無食無穿爲何因　前世未捨半分文
福祿具足爲何因　前世造菴起亭人
聰明智慧爲何因　前世吃齋念佛人
夫妻保守爲何因　前世長旛供佛前
無父無母爲何因　前世都是打鳥人
養子不成爲何因　前世皆因溺女身
今生長命爲何因　前世買物多放生
今生無妻爲何因　前世姦淫作惡人
今生奴婢爲何因　前世忘恩背義人
今生瞎眼爲何因　前世指路不分明
今生聾啞爲何因　前世惡口罵雙親
今生缺手爲何因　前世都是造業人

爾時阿難陀尊者在靈山會上一千二百五十人俱頂禮合掌遶佛三匝胡跪問訊請問本師釋迦牟尼佛南閻浮提一切衆生末法時至多生不善不敬三寶不重父母無有齋戒人倫雜亂貧窮下賤六投不足終日殺生害命富貴貧窮亦不平等以何果報望世尊慈悲願爲弟子一一解說佛告阿難並諸大弟子善哉善哉汝今諦聽吾當爲汝等分明說之是故世間一切男女貧賤富貴受苦無窮享福不盡皆是前生因果之報以何所作故先須孝敬父母次要敬信三寶三要戒殺放生四要吃齋布施能種後世福田

佛說因果偈雲　富貴皆由命

前世各脩因　有人受持者　世世福祿深

善男信女聽言因　聽念三世因果經　三世因果非小可　佛言眞語莫非輕

今生做官爲何因　三世黃金粧佛身　三世修來今世受　紫袍玉帶佛前求

黃金粧佛粧自己　華蓋如來蓋自身　莫說做官皆容易　前世不脩何處來

佛說三世因果經

人如不孝不如鴉。
鳥獸尚知親恩報，
羔羊跪乳敬羊媽。
兒鴉反哺老母鴉，

三途之難不可稱計。勤修佛法猶救頭然。五戒十善六度無極。四等四恩智慧善權。咸可精行。雖不值佛世。出家爲道學不唐捐。平其本心愍念一切十方蒙恩。佛說如是。諸比丘悲喜前自歸佛。作禮而去

佛說當來變經

業在空閑處不修道業。二愔遊人間憒鬧之中行來談。言求好袈裟五色之服。三高聽遠視以爲綺雅。自以高德無能及者。以雜碎習比日月之明畜已。四不攝三事。不護根門。行婦女間。宣文飾辭。多言合偶。以動人心。使清變濁。身行荒亂。正法廢遲。是爲四事。令法毀滅

佛告比丘。復有五事。令法毀滅。何謂爲五。一或有比丘。本以法故出家修道。廢深經教十二因緣三十七品。方等深妙玄虛之慧。習度無極。善權方便。空無相願至化之節。二反習雜句淺末小經。世俗行故。王者經典亂道之原。好講此業。易解世事。趣得人心令其歡喜。因致名聞。三新聞法人。淺解之士意用妙快。深達之士不用爲佳。四天龍鬼神不以爲喜。心懷悒感口發斯言。大法欲滅故使其然。捨妙法化反宣雜句。諸天流淚速逝而去。五由是正法稍稍見捨無精修者。是爲五事。令法毀滅

佛告比丘。吾滅度後。有此邪事十五之亂令法毀滅。一何痛哉。若有比丘欲諦學道。棄捐綺飾不求名聞。質朴守眞宣傳正經。佛之雅典深法之化不用多言。案本說經不捨正句。希言屢中不失佛意。麤衣趣食。得美不甘得麤不惡。衣食好醜隨施者意不以瞋喜。攝身口意。守諸根門不違佛教。念命甚矩恍惚以過。如夢所見覺不知處。

佛說當來變經

西晉月氏國三藏竺法護譯

聞如是。一時佛在舍衞國祇樹給孤獨園。與大比丘衆俱。比丘五百及諸菩薩

爾時世尊告諸比丘。將來之世當有比丘。因有一法不從法化。令法毀滅不得長益。何謂爲一。不護禁戒。不能守心。不修智慧。放逸其意。唯求善名不順道教。不肯勤慕度世之業。是爲一事。令法毀滅

佛告比丘。復有二事令法毀滅。何謂爲二。一不護禁戒。不攝其心不修智慧。畜妻養子。放心恣意。買作治生。以共相活。二伴黨相著。憎奉法者欲令陷墮。故爲言義謂之諛諂。內犯惡行。外佯清白。是爲二事。令法毀滅

佛告諸比丘。復有三事。令法毀滅。何謂爲三。一既不護禁戒不能攝心不修智慧。二自讀文字不識句逗。以上著下以下著上。頭尾顚倒不能解了義之所歸。自以爲是。三明者呵之不從其教反懷瞋恨。謂相嫉妬。識義者少。多不別理咸云爲是。是爲三事。令法毀滅

佛告諸比丘。復有四事。令法毀滅。何謂爲四。一將來比丘已捨家

違於如來聖教。」

爾時，阿難從於坐中安祥而起，白佛言：「世尊，此經當何名之？云何奉持？」

佛告阿難：「此經名爲（父母恩重難報經），以是名字，汝當奉持！」

爾時，大衆、天人、阿修羅等，聞佛所說，皆大歡喜，信受奉行，作禮而退。

南無阿蜜栗帝。多婆曳莎訶 三稱

世尊禮骨，阿難問因，佛說過去父母身，功恩大無倫，垂教後人，衆生可問津。

南無報恩德菩薩摩訶薩摩訶般若波羅蜜。

回向偈

願以此功德　莊嚴佛淨土
上報四重恩　下濟三塗苦
若有見聞者　悉發菩提心
盡此一報身　同身極樂國

碾身，縱橫駛過，腸肚分裂，骨肉焦爛，一日之中，千生萬死。受如是苦，皆因前身五逆不孝，故獲斯罪。」

爾時，大衆聞佛所說父母恩德，垂淚悲泣，告於如來：「我等今者，云何報得父母深恩？」

佛告弟子：「欲得報恩，爲於父母造此經典，是眞報得父母恩也。能造一卷，得見一佛；能造十卷，得見十佛；能造百卷，得見百佛；能造千卷，得見千佛；能造萬卷，得見萬佛。是等善人，造經力故，是諸佛等，常來慈護，立使其人，生身父母，得生天上，受諸快樂，離地獄苦。」

爾時，阿難及諸大衆、阿修羅、迦樓羅、緊那羅、摩睺羅伽、人非人等、天、龍、夜叉、乾闥婆、及諸小王、轉輪聖王，是諸大衆聞佛所言，身毛皆豎，悲泣哽咽，不能自裁，各發願言：「我等從今盡未來際，寧碎此身猶如微塵，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以鐵鉤拔出其舌，長有由旬，鐵犁耕之，血流成河，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以百千刀輪，於自身中，自由出入，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以鐵網周匝纏身，經百千劫，誓不違於如來聖教；寧以剉碓搥碎其身百千萬段，皮肉筋骨悉皆零落，經百千劫，終不

「假使有人，爲於爹娘，打骨出髓，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩。

「假使有人，爲於爹娘，吞熱鐵丸，經百千劫，徧身焦爛，猶不能報父母深恩。」

爾時，大衆聞佛所說父母恩德，垂淚悲泣，痛割於心，諦思無計，同發聲言，深生慚愧，共白佛言：「世尊！我等今者深是罪人，云何報得父母深恩？」

佛告弟子：「欲得報恩，爲於父母書寫此經，爲於父母讀誦此經，爲於父母懺悔罪愆，爲於父母供養三寶，爲於父母受持齋戒，爲於父母布施修福，若能如是，則得名爲孝順之子：不作此行，是地獄人。」

佛告阿難：「不孝之人，身壞命終，墮於阿鼻無間地獄。此大地獄，縱廣八萬由旬，四面鐵城，周圍鐵網。其地亦鐵，盛火洞然，猛烈火燒，雷奔電爍。烊銅鐵汁，澆灌罪人，銅狗鐵蛇，恒吐烟火，焚燒羹炙，脂膏焦燃，苦痛哀哉，難堪難忍，鉤竿鎗朔，鐵鏃鐵串，鐵槌鐵戟，劍樹刀輪，如雨如雲，空中而下，或斬或刺，苦罰罪人，歷劫受殃，無時暫歇，又令更入餘諸地獄，頭戴火盆，鐵車

爾時，大衆聞佛所說父母重恩，擧身投地，搥胸自撲，身毛孔中，悉皆流血，悶絕躃地，良久乃蘇，高聲唱言：「苦哉，苦哉！痛哉，痛哉！我等今者深是罪人，從來未覺，冥若夜游，今悟知非，心膽俱碎，惟願世尊哀愍救援，云何報得父母深恩？」

爾時，如來卽以八種深重梵音，告諸大衆：汝等當知，我今爲汝分別解說：

「假使有人，左肩担父，右肩担母，研皮至骨，穿骨至髓，遶須彌山，經百千劫，血流決踝，猶不能報父母深恩。」

「假使有人，遭飢饉劫，爲於爹娘，盡其己身，臠割碎壞，猶如微塵，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩。」

「假使有人，爲於爹娘，手執利刀，剜其眼睛，獻於如來，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩。」

「假使有人，爲於爹娘，亦以利刀，割其心肝，血流遍地，不辭痛苦，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩。」

「假使有人，爲於爹娘，百千刀戟，一時刺身，於自身中，左右出入，經百千劫，猶不能報父母深恩。」

亡；作鬼抱魂，不曾割捨。

「或復聞子，不崇學業，朋逐異端，無賴粗頑，好習無益，鬬打窃盜，觸犯鄉閭，飲酒樗蒲，姦非過失，帶累兄弟，惱亂爹娘，晨去暮還，不問尊親，動止寒溫，晦朔朝暮，永乖扶侍，安床薦枕，並不知聞，參問起居，從此間斷，父母年邁，形貌衰羸，羞恥見人，忍受欺抑。

「或有父孤母寡，獨守空堂，猶若客人，寄居他舍，寒凍飢渴，曾不知聞。晝夜常啼，自嗟自嘆，應奉甘旨，供養尊親。若輩妄人，了無是事，每作羞慚，畏人怪笑。

「或持財食，供養妻兒，忘厥疲勞，無避羞恥；妻妾約束，每事依從，尊長瞋呵，全無畏懼。或復是女，適配他人，未嫁之時，咸皆孝順；婚嫁已訖，不孝遂增。父母微瞋，即生怨恨；夫婿打罵，忍受甘心，異姓他宗情深眷重，自家骨肉，却以爲疏。或隨夫婿，外郡他鄉，離別爹娘，無心戀慕，斷絕消息，音信不通，遂使爹娘，懸腸掛肚，刻不能安，宛若倒懸，每思見面，如渴思漿，慈念後人，無有休息。

「父母恩德，無量無邊，不孝之愆，卒難陳報。」

熱，不辭辛苦；乾處兒臥，濕處母眠；三年之中，飲母白血。

「嬰孩童子，乃至成年，教導禮義，婚嫁營謀，備求資業，携荷艱辛，勤苦百倍，不言恩惠。男女有病，父母驚憂，憂極生病，視同常事，子若病除，母病方愈。

「如斯養育，願早成人，及其長成，反爲不孝。尊親與言，不知順從，應對無禮，惡眼相視，欺凌伯叔，打罵兄弟，毀辱親情，無有禮義。雖曾從學，不遵範訓，父母教令，多不依從，兄弟共言，每相違戾。出入來往，不啓尊堂，言行高傲，擅意爲事。父母訓罰，伯叔語非，童幼憐愍，尊人遮護，漸漸成長，狠戾不調，不伏虧違，反生嗔恨。棄諸親友，朋附惡人，習久成性，認非爲是。

「成被人誘，逃往他鄉，違背爹娘，離家別眷。或因經紀，或爲政行，荏苒因循，便爲婚娶，由斯留礙，久不還家。

「或在他鄉，不能謹愼，被人謀害，横事鈎牽，枉被刑責，牢獄枷鎖。或遭病患，厄難縈纏，囚苦饑羸，無人看待，被人嫌賤，委棄街衢，因此命終，無人救治，膨脹爛壞，日暴風吹，白骨飄零，寄他鄉土，便與親族，歡會長乖，違背慈恩。不知二老，永懷憂念，或因啼泣，眼暗目盲，或因悲哀，氣咽成病；或緣憶子，衰變死

第九、深加體恤恩　頌曰：

父母恩情重，恩深報實難，
子苦願代受，兒勞母不安；
聞道遠行去，憐兒夜臥寒，
男女暫辛苦，長使母心酸，

第十、究竟憐愍恩　頌曰：

父母恩深重，恩憐無歇時，
起坐心相逐，近遙意與隨；
母年一百歲，常憂八十兒，
欲知恩愛斷，命盡始分離。

佛告阿難：「我觀衆生，雖紹人品，心行愚蒙，不思爹娘，有大恩德，不生恭敬，忘恩背義，無有仁慈；不孝不順。阿娘懷子，十月之中，起坐不安，如擎重担，飲食不下，如長病人。月滿生時，受諸痛苦，須臾產出，恐已無常，如殺猪羊，血流遍地。受如是苦，生得兒身，咽苦吐甘，抱持養育，洗濯不淨，不憚劬勞；忍寒忍

第六、哺乳養育恩　頌曰：

慈母像大地，嚴父配於天，
覆載恩同等，父娘恩亦然；
不憎無怒目，不嫌手足攣，
誕腹親生子，終日惜兼憐。

第七、洗濯不淨恩　頌曰：

本是芙蓉質，精神健且豐，
眉分新柳碧，臉色奪蓮紅；
恩深摧玉貌，洗濯損盤龍，
只爲憐男女，慈母改顏容。

第八、遠行憶念恩　頌曰：

死別誠難忍，生離實亦傷，
子出關山外，母憶在他鄉；
日夜心相隨，流淚數千行，
如猿泣愛子，寸寸斷肝腸。

第三、生子忘憂恩　頌曰：

慈母生兒日，五臟總開張，
身心俱悶絕，血流似屠羊；
生已聞兒健，歡喜倍加常，
喜定悲還至，痛苦徹心腸。

第四、咽苦吐甘恩　頌曰：

父母恩深重，顧憐沒失時，
吐甘無稍息，咽苦不顰眉；
愛重情難忍，恩深復倍悲，
但令孩兒飽，慈母不辭饑。

第五、廻乾就濕恩　頌曰：

母願身投濕，將兒移就乾，
兩乳充饑渴，羅袖掩風寒；
恩憐恒廢枕，寵弄纔能歡，
但令孩兒穩，慈母不求安。

「如斯重苦，出生此兒，更分晰言，尙有十恩：第一、懷胎守護恩；第二、臨產受苦恩；第三、生子忘憂恩；第四、咽苦吐甘恩；第五、迴乾就濕恩；第六、哺乳養育恩；第七、洗濯不淨恩；第八遠行憶念恩，第九、深加體恤恩；第十、究竟憐愍恩。

第一、懷胎守護恩　頌曰：

累刼因緣重，今來托母胎，
月逾生五臟，七七六精開；
體重如山岳，動止刼風災，
羅衣都不掛，裝鏡惹塵埃。

第二、臨產受苦恩　頌曰：

懷經十箇月，難產將欲臨，
朝朝如重病，日日似昏沉；
難將惶怖述，愁淚滿胸襟，
含悲告親族，惟懼死來侵。

佛告阿難：「汝今諦聽，我當爲汝，分別解說：

「母胎懷子，凡經十月，甚爲辛苦。在母胎時，第一月中，如草上珠，朝不保暮，晨聚將來，午消散去。母懷胎時，第二月中，恰如凝酥。母懷胎時，第三月中，猶如凝血。母懷胎時，第四月中，稍作人形。母懷胎時，第五月中，兒在母腹，生有五胞。何者爲五？頭爲一胞，兩肘兩膝，各爲一胞，共成五胞。母懷胎時，第六月中，兒在母腹，六精齊開。何者爲六？眼爲一精，耳爲二精，鼻爲三精，口爲四精，舌爲五精，意爲六精。母懷胎時，第七月中，兒在母腹，生成骨節，三百六十，及生毛乳，八萬四千。母懷胎時，第八月中，出生意智，以及九竅。母懷胎時，第九月中，兒在母腹，吸收食物，所出各質，桃梨蒜菓、五穀精華。其母身中，生藏向下，熟臟向上，喻如地面，有山聳出，山有三名，一號須彌，二號業山，三號血山。此設喻山，一度崩來，化爲一條，母血凝成胎兒食料。母懷胎時，第十月中，孩兒全體一一完成，方乃降生。若是決爲孝順之子，擎拳合掌，安祥出生，不損傷母，母無所苦。倘兒決爲五逆之子，破損母胎，扯母心肝，踏母跨骨，如千刀攪，又髣髴似萬叉攢心。

訶薩三萬八千人俱。

爾時，世尊引領大衆，直往南行，忽見路邊聚骨一堆。爾時，如來向彼枯骨，五體投地，恭敬禮拜。

阿難合掌白言：「世尊！如來是三界大師，四生慈父，衆人歸敬，以何因緣，禮拜枯骨？」

佛告阿難：「汝等雖是吾上首弟子，出家日久，知事未廣。此一堆枯骨，或是我前世祖先，多生父母。以是因緣，我今禮拜。」佛告阿難：「汝今將此一堆枯骨分作二分，若是男骨，色白且重；若是女骨，色黑且輕。」

阿難白言：「世尊，男人在世，衫帶鞋帽，裝束嚴好，一望知爲男子之身。女人在世，多塗脂粉，或薰蘭麝，如是裝飾，即得知是女流之身。而今死後，白骨一般，教弟子等，如何認得？」

佛告阿難：「若是男子，在世之時，入於伽藍，聽講經律，禮拜三寶，念佛名號；所以其骨，色白且重。世間女人，短於智力，易溺於情，生男育女，認爲天職；每生一孩，賴乳養命，乳由血變，每孩飲母八斛四斗甚多白乳，所以憔悴，骨現黑色，其量亦輕。」

阿難聞語，痛割於心，垂淚悲泣，白言：「世尊！母之恩德，云何報答？」

香讚

爐香乍爇，法界蒙熏，諸佛海會悉遙聞，隨處結祥雲，誠意方殷，諸佛現全身。

南無香雲蓋菩薩摩訶薩　三稱

南無本師釋迦牟尼佛三稱

發願文

皈命十方佛，頂禮三寶尊，阿難陀尊者，護法諸聖衆，我今發宏願，持誦報恩經，上報四重恩，下濟三途苦，並願衆先靈，餓鬼與孤魂，咸皆蒙超生，脫離一切苦，速發菩提心，早得智慧果，得成無上道，共同生淨土。

父母恩重難報經

姚秦三藏法師鳩摩羅什奉　詔譯

如是我聞：

一時，佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園，與大比丘二千五百人，菩薩摩

金刚大十之像佛经佛造印

一二三四五六七八九十

印造佛經佛像之十大利益

一 從前所作種種罪過。輕者立即消滅，重者亦得轉輕。

二 常得吉神擁護，一切瘟疫、水火、寇盜、刀兵、牢獄之災，悉皆不受。

三 夙生怨對，咸蒙法益，而得解脫，永免尋仇報復之苦。

四 夜叉惡鬼，不能侵犯，毒蛇餓虎，不能爲害。

五 心得安慰，日無險事，夜無惡夢，顏色光澤，氣力充盛，所作吉利。

六 至心奉法，雖無希求，自然衣食豐足，家庭和睦，福祿緜長。

七 所言所行，人天歡喜。任到何方，常爲多衆傾誠愛戴，恭敬禮拜。

八 愚者轉智，病者轉健，困者轉亨，爲婦女者，報謝之日，捷轉男身。

九 永離惡道，受生善道。相貌端正，天資超越，福祿殊勝。

十 能爲一切衆生，種植善根。以衆生心，作大福田，獲無量勝果。所生之處，常得見佛聞法。直至三慧宏開，六通親證，速得成佛。

印造經像，既有如此殊勝功德，故凡遇〇祝壽〇賀喜〇免災〇祈求〇懺悔〇薦拔之時，皆宜歡喜施捨，努力行之。

父母恩重難酬經

佛說當來變經

佛說二十四因果經

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